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SUBJECT: IRISH FM TO PROPOSE USAID-IRISH AID COLLABORATION ON FOOD SECURITY IN MALAWI

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Dr. Vincent O'Neil, Director of IrishAid in Malawi, told the USAID Director that Irish Foreign Minister Michael Martin will soon meet with Secretary of State Clinton regarding joint efforts to increase the level of attention to agriculture and food security issues. O'Neil said FM Martin is likely to propose Malawi as an initial candidate for collaboration on agriculture development and food security programming between the two countries.

Comment: The government of Malawi's strong commitment to food security and existing synergies between USAID and IrishAID agriculture programs in the country make Malawi an ideal candidate for initial collaboration in the sector. End Summary.

FORGING NEW PARTNERSHIPS ON FOOD SECURITY IN MALAWI

¶12. (SBU) The Director of IrishAid in Malawi, Dr. Vincent O'Neil met with the USAID Director on June 2 regarding potential program synergies. During the meeting, O'Neil told the USAID Director that Irish Foreign Minister Martin plans to meet with Secretary Clinton on June 10 to follow-up on a previous meeting regarding food security and the potential for collaboration between the respective development programs. According to O'Neil, FM Martin will propose Malawi as an initial candidate for U.S.-Irish collaboration of food security programs.

¶13. (SBU) During the meeting, USAID/Malawi and Irish Aid/Malawi identified numerous similarities and potential synergies in their agricultural development strategies. Significant opportunities exist for collaborative and complementary work to support on-going government agricultural policy restructuring and to enhance smallholder farmer productivity, crop diversification and improved nutrition activities.

¶14. (SBU) Fueling this potential collaboration, both missions are currently developing new agriculture strategies and anticipate substantial increases in agriculture funding. These efforts will also complement the Malawian Government's new Agricultural Development Program (ADP).

AN IDEAL TIME FOR COLLABORATION WITH IRISH AID

¶15. (SBU) Comment: Malawi is an ideal first candidate for collaboration between USAID and IrishAID. President Mutharika's newly elected government has a mandate to expand his strong commitment to food security and agricultural development in Malawi. Moreover, USAID/Malawi has a strong history of collaboration on projects with other development partners. USAID/Malawi and IrishAid/Malawi already have agricultural support programs with very similar objectives that should ease collaboration. Both programs are also entering new programming cycles with planned resource increases, making the timing for joint planning ideal.

BODDE